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DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS.

ON THE MANNER OF TAKING A CENSUS.

To the Committee of Publication

of the Am. Geo. and Stat. Society:

GENTLEMEN,—In my last letter, I noticed some of the difficulties that must be met with under the most favorable circumstances, in obtaining a census. Others, arising from foreign languages, remoteness from other settlements, difficulty of access, absence from home, and similar causes, will try the patience and energies of the Census Marshals, but may be overcome by proper industry, and the aid of interpreters and other persons familiar with localities and their affairs generally. The person appointed for obtaining the statistics should be always a resident of the district he is to canvass, and, as far as possible, acquainted with its inhabitants and their general pursuits.

It will sometimes be found that people are unwilling to return the statistics of their business for the census, just as they sometimes refuse their names for a directory; and that under an apprehension of taxation, or fear that a rival may be excited, or a competitor informed, or a creditor alarmed by a minute statement of their affairs, the required statistics will be denied; and if obtained, must be had from other parties, or be founded upon extremely uncertain and indefinite data. More frequently, however, the Marshal will notice a tendency to over-rate or under-estimate the statistics of business, from the motives just stated, as every Assessor must have observed in his official duties, as he met persons anxious to figure high or low upon his rolls.

These evasions or perversions of the law are exceptional, rather than general, and in most cases arise from a misconception of its spirit. Every return made for the census should be considered as *under a pledge of secrecy*, and should be given and received with the confident assurance, that the facts were to appear only in the general summaries—that in no event should the items be made the basis of taxation, and

that under no circumstances should other persons be allowed to use or examine the particular statements made, except for summary and classification. Such is unquestionably the intention of the law, and it has been thus expressly announced in the official instructions of the last federal and New York State censuses. As a further guaranty, it should be incorporated in the statute, and its observance, on the part of the Census Marshals, should be enjoined by law, as it now is by honor.

It is usual to attach penalties for refusing to answer the questions proposed in the schedules of the census, or for wilfully mis-stating facts, but prosecutions for such refusal or evasion have been extremely rare; if, indeed, they have ever occurred in this country. In a single instance, such a prosecution was begun, in 1855, in New York, but the proceedings were dropped before the case came up for trial. That such penalties are salutary, and even necessary, there can be no doubt; but to be effective, their prosecution should follow with certainty, and their amount should not be so great as to appear too severe and oppressive, or as to excite sympathy for the accused, and thus lessen his chances of conviction.

Were the confidential character of the census returns generally and properly understood, and to this end made prominent in the statute, the motive for concealment or evasion would mostly cease, and an important difficulty in the way of obtaining the elements for a correct classification of national statistics, would be removed. The most effective means for obtaining accurate returns of industrial pursuits must be, to circulate widely, and to bring within the personal knowledge of every one, a list of the inquiries which will be made, a sufficient time before the enumeration begins to allow answers to be prepared and ready for the Census Marshals. The expense of furnishing blanks, prepared for the purpose, to each manufacturer and extensive producer, several days before they are to be called upon for returns, would greatly enhance the accuracy of the industrial census, and expedite the labors of those

employed in obtaining it, even were he required to pass twice over their district, in distributing and collecting the schedules. Those who have been engaged as census takers, will readily appreciate the relief that would have been afforded them, had the persons from whom they received information been prepared with full statements, ready for their use; and few persons, who have experienced the delays and inconvenience attending the procuring of facts concerning agriculture and manufactures, from families and persons who had made no preparation for giving them, would not prefer, for the same compensation, to go twice over their district, if assured that no delays were to attend their visits. The chances of omission of important items, through inadvertence, would be greatly reduced, the inconvenience of finding persons temporarily absent would be lessened, and actual results from accounts and other records would, in many instances, take the place of impromptu estimates.

The simultaneous enumerations of Europe, which refer to, and are often made in a single day, render such schedules for single families necessary. We have never been able to execute the work in so brief a period, and methods for shortening the process are still among the things to be earnestly desired, and if possible, obtained. May it not be well to inquire whether such a previous distribution of inquiries, to be filled up by families and individuals, would not greatly abridge the labor and enhance the accuracy of the census? Were it to effect but one of these objects, it would abundantly repay the few hundred reams of paper which it would require for the nation, and relieve this great enterprise from many of the anomalous, absurd, and contradictory features which necessarily appear on almost every page of the returns; perhaps without fault of any party, but rather from the misfortune of being called upon without preparation for the details of a business extending through many ramifications, and complicated with many interests which can only be analyzed and adjusted by patient investigation and careful computation.

Respectfully yours,
FRANKLIN B. HOUGH.

ALBANY, March 18, 1859.

STATISTICS OF AMERICAN STATES.

NO. 5.

REPUBLIC OF BOLIVIA.

Lat. 10° 21' to 25° 38' S.	Populat'n (1855) 2,326,126.
Long. 57° 34' to 70° 42' W.	Density, 4.91 to sq. mile.
Area, 473,298 sq. miles.	Capital, Chuquisaca.

GOVERNMENT.

Executive.—President, (formerly chosen for life,) elected for six years.

Administration.—1. Minister of the Interior and Religion; 2. Minister of Finance and Police; 3. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Public Instruction; and, 4. Minister of War.

Legislature.—Three Chambers—that of Senators, that of Tribunes, and that of Censors.

Judiciary.—A Supreme Court at the capital; provincial courts in the chief provincial towns, and courts of inferior jurisdiction in districts and parishes. Also ecclesiastical courts.

National Religion.—The Holy Apostolic Roman Catholic. The Church is under the immediate supervision of the Archbishop of Charcas or Chuquisaca, and of the Bishops of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, and La Paz de Ayacucho.

HEIGHTS OF BOLIVIAN ANDES.

	Lat. S.	Long. W.	Hgt. ft.
Sorata	15° 41'	68° 36'	21,286
Illimani (ill, snow)	16° 46'	67° 47'	21,252
Chachacomani	16° 08'	68° 22'	20,235
Supaiwasi or Huynuna			
Potosi Peak	19° 26'	65° 43'	20,167
Mesada Nevada	16° 32'	67° 52'	19,356
Angel Peak	16° 10'	68° 14'	19,061
Cacacea	16° 28'	69° 02'	19,210
Cololo	14° 57'	69° 12'	17,932
Chorolque	20° 47'	65° 51'	16,548
Lake Titicaca	15° 40'	67° 30'	12,795
Mean height of B. Andes			13,502

HEIGHTS OF PASSES IN BOLIVIAN ANDES.

	Feet.
Tolapalea—from Potosi to Oruro	14,196
Condur Pacheta— “ ”	14,040
Paeuani—from La Paz to the Beni	15,349

RIVERS OF BOLIVIA.

Flowing into the Pacific.—Loa, on the Peruvian border, and Frio, on the Chilean border, between which is the Desert of Atacama.

Flowing through the Amazon and the Paraguay, into the Atlantic.—Purus, Beni, Mamore, Blanco or Ubai, and Guapore; and Vermejo, San Juan, Pilcomayo, etc. The Paraguay forms the eastern boundary.